Each Word of Skin

> There is a way our bodies
> are not our own, and when he finds her
> there is room at last
> for everyone they love,
> the place he finds,
> she finds, each word of skin
> a decision. (Anne Michaels)[1]

> The writer must get into touch with his reader by putting before him something which he recognizes, which therefore stimulates his imagination, and makes him willing to cooperate in the far more difficult business of intimacy. (Virginia Woolf)[2]

Offering a 'word of skin', Anne Michaels' 'Into Arrival' touches on the ways that the skin might be written about, written on and written into being. Pointing to the intimate relationship between the page and the surface of the body, the poem not only suggests that the skin signifies, but also indicates opportunities for it to be read, and re-read differently. Identifying this bond, Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey argue that the skin and writing are both 'processes that involve materiality and signification, limits and possibilities, thought and affect, difference and identity'.[3] The skin's capacity to signify, moreover, leads them to conclude that we cannot think about the skin without touching on its 'writerly effect'.[4] This book is an examination of the relationship between writing and the surface of the body, considering not only the writing-effects of the skin, but also the ways that the text is like a skin, shedding, exposing and dissolving its own limits. And if the text functions like a skin, what happens, it asks, when a work of literature moves or touches us? As Virginia Woolf seems to indicate, touch can take place on a textual as well as a corporeal level. Insisting that it is the writer's task to 'get into touch' with the reader, Woolf points to the tactile exchanges inherent in acts of reading and writing. Drawing on a range of work by

twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers, and considering the 'skin-effects' of language, this book explores the relationship between text and tact. In the following pages, we think about how texts touch not only their readers, but also touch on themselves and each other.

Touch paper 1: skin

> In the beginning, touch; at the origin, the medium. (Michel Serres)[5]

Before we begin, if it is ever possible to begin, or to begin again, there is touch.[6] As Michel Serres writes in *The Five Senses*, it is 'at the origin, the medium'. But touch comes to mean different things, at different times and in different places, to different people.[7] This makes any theorisation of 'the' sense of touch a potentially troublesome one. Let us start, or start over, then, at the skin, for Jacques Derrida is not alone in his insistence that 'a thinking of touch must at least go through a theory of skin'.[8] As the site of our encounter with the world, the skin's signification is multiple and complex, perpetually generating new meanings and alternative lines of thought. Steven Connor's *The Book of Skin* provides a rich analysis of the changing status of the skin in historical and cultural terms, detailing the development of its representation in art and literature. He explains that although it covers the whole of the body, the skin in classical and medieval times was never actually considered to be part of the body. It was simultaneously 'glorified' and 'disposed of'; 'like a universal currency, the skin could underpin every value while having none itself'.[9] This was the tendency in Western civilisation for centuries: the skin functioned as an invisible background for the rest of the body. Unless it pertained to disordered skins – skins marked in some way by race, culture, disease or trauma – the surface of the body remained unseen. Although, as Connor points out, the first book about the skin to be published in Europe was Girolamo Mercurialis's *De Morbis Cutaneis* in 1572, no further significant work on the skin appeared for nearly two hundred years.[10] It was only with the advances of science in the early modern era that the body began to be perceived differently. By the late eighteenth century, the skin had become that which we must breach to get to the body's inside. In effect, knowledge of the body was produced through disembodiment as the skin was stripped back in anatomical dissection. Claudia Benthien notes:

> The history of anatomy can thus also be read as reverse archaeology, a paradoxical uncovering of layers in which the deepest strata were conquered first and the gaze returned only gradually to the surface, where a more refined

analysis revealed that the material that was initially flipped aside unnoticed was significant.[11]

Thus, only when the depths of the body had been penetrated did the scrutiny, at last, return to the surface.

In recent years, however, the body's margins have taken centre stage in critical and cultural theory, and far from being nudged aside, the skin is often considered to be at the forefront of identity. Critics emphasise not only its position as the site of individuation, but also its significance as the milieu through which we come to know and make contact with ourselves and other people. Facilitating dialogic exchange with the world, the skin is thus both the point of contact and the site of rupture. Studies of the skin have multiplied, indicating the various ways that the surface of the body signifies in different contexts. Examples include Benthien's reading of the representation of skin colour in literature and the history of science, Jennifer Biddle's account of the inscriptive practices of Australian Aborigines, Constance Classen's examination of animal skins, and Jay Prosser's discussion of the significance of the skin for transsexuals.[12] What unites these studies is a refusal to take the skin for granted; rather than seeing it as a background screen, these critics draw attention to the crucial importance of the body's limits.

But the skin must be read beyond the boundary of the body. Particularly relevant to the direction of this study is the work of French psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu, for whom the skin – our largest organ – is always the most important matter of the self. In *The Skin Ego*, first published in French in 1985, Anzieu positions touch as our first language; as infants, it is through the surfaces of our bodies that we first experience feelings of pleasure and displeasure. These early experiences enable connections between the external sensations of the skin and our internal emotional states. Researching the reciprocal relationship between the skin and the psyche in light of the pathologies that he encountered while working in a dermatological unit, Anzieu insists on the need for a unifying bodily envelope or psychical skin. This is the projection of the skin in the mind in order to generate an envelope or container for our sense of self. Implicit in Anzieu's account, however, is the contradictory nature of this skin: it is 'both permeable and impermeable, superficial and profound, truthful and misleading. It is regenerative, but caught up in a continual process of desiccation [. . .] The skin is both solid and fragile.'[13] It is these contradictions that make Anzieu's model a useful way of thinking about aesthetic form. The depth of the relationship between psyche and skin, and its implications for a theory of writing, is hinted at in Anzieu's passing reference to a 'poet searching for a "skin of

words" [*peau de mots*] to weave on to his blank page'.[14] Here, Anzieu alludes to what is made apparent in Michaels' poem: the irreducible bond between words and skin. This relationship lies at the core of this book, and in the following chapters we consider the ways that thinking through the contradictions of the surface of the body might provide us with a framework for reading the complexities of a 'textual skin'.

Touch paper II: touch

If a text can function as a skin, how might writing work to touch us? For Aristotle, who sets out a theory of the five senses in *De Anima*, touch is always our primary means of perception. While all the senses contribute to our sense of well-being, touch is the only sense that we cannot live without. Necessary for all the other senses to function, it is our 'common sense'. Although all animals have the sense of touch, Aristotle argues that it is the condition of human intelligence: 'in point of touch his accuracy exceeds that of the others by a long way. And it is also for this reason that he is the most intelligent of the animals.'[15] Despite its central role, however, he considers touch to be the basest or most servile sense, an opinion maintained by many Western philosophers for the last two and a half thousand years. Susan Stewart, for instance, provides a detailed account of the classical view of the senses, referring to medieval writers who use didactic and allegorical tales to demonstrate the view that touch is the condition of four other senses. Associated with proximity and corporeality, touch is conceptualised as residing within the body and thus separate from the mind. Its position in opposition to the intellect is evident in Elizabethan poetry, which, Stewart remarks, makes 'witty, satirical use of the lower senses of taste, smell and touch'.[16] The debasement of touch is still evident today and, as Michel Serres points out, 'many philosophies refer to sight; few to hearing; fewer still place their trust in the tactile, or olfactory. Abstraction divides up the sentient body, eliminates taste, smell and touch, retains only sight and hearing, intuition and understanding.'[17] Serres seeks to counter this hierarchy of the senses, and opens his examination with an account of touch, which he positions here, at the origin, right at the beginning.

Serres is not alone in his attention to touch, and research into the tactile has been rejuvenated in recent years. Santanu Das, for example, notes that 'there has been a sudden swell of interest in the senses'.[18] Touch, often considered the most 'intimate' and 'elusive' of the senses, has, as Das explains, gained new ground.[19] It is also the first sense to develop *in utero*. Clinical and theoretical research indicate that it is

central to subjectivity, and developmental psychologists have become particularly interested in the role of touch in human behaviour. Ashley Montagu proposes that bodily contact between the infant and the caregiver is vital for healthy human growth, and cites, at great length, several ailments that are the result of inadequate cutaneous stimulation during childhood.[20] But the crucial significance of our experiences of the skin is not restricted to infancy. Locating touch at the interface between the self and the world, Irving Goh and Ryan Bishop emphasise that touch is always the 'irreducible fact of existence, of our existing with others'.[21] Touch, for these thinkers, is at the heart of all being. And because of this, a rethinking of touch necessarily unsettles our ideas about ourselves and the world around us.

Certainly, scholars seem to have a lot to say about touch and over the last two decades the tactile has become the subject of intense critical debate.[22] Laura McMahon, for instance, wonders if

> this current surge in a fascination with touch – and specifically, an investment in its associated dimensions of materiality, authenticity and referentiality – might be linked to a nostalgia for an embodied presence perceived to be lost in a digital age of hyper-mediated experience.[23]

This book is not just interested in the ways that touch is mediated in digital culture, but in all experiences of contact. Central to my argument is the work of Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy. In *Corpus*, Nancy challenges the work of phenomenologists such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who suggests in *The Visible and the Invisible* that the reflexivity of the self-touch plays out the interrelatedness of self to world.[24] Questioning this sense of epidermal mediation, as well as Edmund Husserl's understanding of touch as immediate and auto-affective, Nancy insists 'I am an outside for myself.'[25] He explains why, for him, phenomenology's efforts to describe a 'primary interiority' are impossible: 'to begin with, I have to be an exteriority in order to touch myself. And what I touch remains on the outside.'[26] The body's experience, he argues, is always exterior. Moreover, he goes on to point to the ways that the self-reflexivity of touch is itself always untouchable: to touch oneself is to touch what is untouchable, 'since "self-touching" is not, as such, something that can be touched'.[27] Nancy thus introduces a spacing or interval into touch: it becomes the point at which we encounter exteriority, where it tends towards its own non-sense. The separation that always inhabits touch is a theme to which he often returns, and in *Being Singular Plural* he writes, 'there is proximity, but only to the extent that extreme closeness emphasises the distancing it opens up'.[28] Nancy's

insistence on the spacing at the heart of touch complicates our relationship not only to ourselves and to other people or objects, but also, as we consider in the pages that follow, to the literary text.

Jacques Derrida takes up Nancy's discussion in *On Touching – Jean-Luc Nancy*, first published as *Le Toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy* in France in 2000. He also outlines a haptocentric tradition that privileges the presence and immediacy associated with touch. Although Nancy's emphasis on the separation that lies at the heart of touch challenges this haptocentrism, Derrida suggests that it does not sufficiently overturn phenomenology's metaphysics of presence – or, as McMahon hints, Nancy's model may not be 'deconstructive *enough*'.[29] The complex manner in which Derrida engages with Nancy's work on touch – the way he, as J. Hillis Miller puts it, 'takes back with the left hand what he has given with the right' – has sparked much debate.[30] For Miller, Derrida locates within Nancy's self-proclaimed deconstruction of Christianity traces of ontotheological discourse – a language that retains vestiges of the privileging of presence and essence. He surmises, 'to put it briefly and inadequately, Derrida finds in Nancy's phrasing a lingering nostalgia for immediate touching'.[31] He concludes that Derrida's break with Nancy 'is always a matter of the way things are put, that is, it is always a matter of language'.[32] Suggesting that the terms of Nancy's debate demonstrate an underlying return to metaphysical assumptions of immediacy, Derrida remains committed to the distance at the heart of touch. Critiquing Husserl's 'principle of all principles', he troubles this reliance on immediacy as 'the first axiom of a phenomenology of touch'.[33] Because we can only touch the outside of objects with the outside of our bodies, contact always involves an interval between two or more surfaces, even when these surfaces are auto-affective. Rather than being, as Nancy seems to suggest, an encounter with exteriority, Derrida stresses the 'interruption, interposition, detour of the between *in the middle* of contact'; interrogating the site of division between inside and outside, he insists that touching is always already inhabited by its own '*différance* of the *between*' – and it is this interval or spacing between two surfaces that becomes the very condition of contact.[34] A certain untouchability, then, lies at the heart of a text on tact.

Touch paper III: tact

'Tracking down all the tropological uses of touch' in Nancy's work, Derrida cites a passage from 'Unum quid', within which Nancy asserts: 'The displacement [of *quasi*] does not *touch* on anything important.'[35]

Derrida notes, however, that 'the emphasis on "touch" is mine'.[36] He continues, 'Here, "to touch" means to say to tamper with, to change, to displace, to call into question; thus it is invariably a setting in motion, a kinetic experience.'[37] But to which 'touch' is Derrida referring? One answer may be that he is referring to Nancy's suggestion that the displacement does not touch on (or tamper with) anything important; his point might also, however, be applied to his own handling of Nancy's text. By emphasising the word '*touch*' in his citation of Nancy, Derrida inevitably changes and calls into question Nancy's 'original' text. Derrida is of course mindful of the implications of these relations of tact, and his writing is always an invitation to touch back. But how do we touch without tampering? How do texts touch on each other with tact?

Lisa McNally tackles this question of tact in *Reading Theories in Contemporary Fiction*. In all matters of reading, she says, tact is indispensable. If tact is taken to refer to a certain restraint or lightness of touch, then, as McNally suggests, a tactful reading must be a respectful, judicious, even reserved touch.[38] McNally responds to the work of Valentine Cunningham in *Reading After Theory*, who warns that 'theory keeps mishandling' the text.[39] Instead, he argues, we must read with tact, which requires a 'gentle touch, caring touch, loving touch; appropriate handling, unmanipulative reading'.[40] Tactful, 'true' or 'real readers', he insists, 'don't paw and mammock, don't abuse, the text'.[41] For Cunningham, a tactful approach lies in 'close reading, no less'.[42] McNally highlights the ironies of this account of close reading, pointing out that Cunningham's discussion incorporates phrases such as '"tending towards", "approaching near" and "coming carefully"', all of which indicate 'an inclination to touch, which never, in fact, makes contact'.[43] She cites Isobel Armstrong's point that a tactful reading might be better termed 'distance reading, not close reading'.[44] McNally thus draws our attention to the double bind of tactful reading; it requires at the same time close attention to and distance from the text. Our own handling of words, then, must somehow work in accordance with tact's impossible contradictions.

Touch paper IV: feeling

In *On Touching*, Derrida touches not only on the work of Nancy but also that of Hélène Cixous – the other of his 'two miracle wonderfriends'.[45] Like Derrida, Cixous is attuned to the impossible contradictions of tact even while playing out the bodily effects of poetic language. In her essay 'Making Sense from Singular and Collective

Touches', Verena Andermatt Conley identifies Cixous's ongoing appeal to the body: 'to write, she declares in the best of Romantic traditions, we have to close our eyes and focus on touch'.[46] This is most evident in works such as 'Writing Blind: Conversation with the Donkey', where Cixous identifies an approach to writing that embraces the complexities of touch and feeling.[47] This use of the metaphor of touch and Cixous's writerly approach to feeling are addressed more fully in Chapter 4, but I wish to signal here the overarching influence of her work on the direction of this book. In particular, I'd like to suggest that the texture of the exchanges that pass between Cixous and Derrida opens up ways of rethinking reading and writing with tact. In her *Insister of Jacques Derrida*, Cixous refers to the space or passage between Derrida's work and her own; like a skin, the passage between one text and another is that which separates and unites, or 'separeunifies'.[48] This textual skin not only hints at the literary tact between them, then, but also refers to the way that for both, a tactful writing tends towards its own interruption.

A turn towards feeling also features in Gabriel Josipovici's work in this field. In *Touch*, he stresses the need 'to feel one's way forward with care'.[49] Instinct tells him that a theory of touch requires 'groping my way forward'.[50] But that, he continues, 'is appropriate to the subject in hand'.[51] 'In hand?' he presses. 'That is surely the point. I do not have the subject in my hand. I do not hold it. But where then is it?'[52] Josipovici seems to profess a certain blindness to touch: his approach to the slipperiness of tact can only be addressed in terms of fumbling and feeling, of groping and grasping.[53] This dynamic is one that José Saramago explores at length in *Blindness*. Struck by an epidemic of blindness, his characters discover through the course of the novel that they must rely on their sense of touch to find their way. A blind man assumes that he will recognise his front door 'by the magic of touch, as if he were carrying a magic wand'.[54] As a result, the novel is invested with the language of groping, of stumbling and of grasping: 'They advanced very slowly, as if mistrustful of the person guiding them, groping in vain with their free hand, searching for the support of something solid, a wall, a doorframe.'[55] What is especially remarkable for our concerns, however, is the way that Saramago handles the specific relationship between blindness, writing and touching in the closing pages of the novel:

> One day I may tell you what it was like, then you can write a book, Yes, I am writing it, How, if you are blind, The blind too can write You mean that you had time to learn the Braille alphabet, I do not know Braille, How can you write, then, asked the first blind man, Let me show you. He got up from his chair, left the room and after a minute returned, he was holding a sheet of

> paper in his hand and a ball-point pen, this is the last complete page I have written, We cannot see it, said the wife of the first blind man, Nor I, said the writer, Then how can you write, asked the doctor's wife, looking at the sheet of paper where in the half-light of the room she could make out tightly compressed lines, occasionally super-imposed, By touch, the writer answered smiling [. . .][56]

The question of writing, for Derrida, is always linked to blindness. Asking 'what happens when one writes without seeing?' he describes the way that 'a hand of the blind ventures forth alone or disconnected, in a poorly delimited space; it feels its way, it gropes, it caresses as much as it inscribes, trusting in the memory of signs and supplementing sight'.[57]

In a sense, this book is also an act of 'writing blind', as Cixous calls it. Echoing Josipovici, the subject is not in hand – far from it – for when could touch ever be fully grasped? Instead, this exploration of writing and touch is a journey in the dark, endeavouring to feel its own way forward. Its attempts to venture forth are, perhaps, not always as tactful as I'd like. Reiterating David Wills' discussion of the difficulty of separating an 'apparent constantive and a more obviously performative mode' of writing, *Tactile Poetics* seeks not only to address, but also to play out, aspects of a relationship between writing and touch.[58] Aware of their own writerliness to varying degrees, the following chapters experiment with mode, form and address as a way of gesturing towards different literary textures. Feeling its way forward, *Tactile Poetics* explores and performs the (mis)adventures of literary contact.

Touch paper V: reaching out

Not least because of its self-proclaimed blindness, it is worth offering a brief outline of the chapters that come together to form this book, to attempt to take its gestures in hand. *Tactile Poetics* follows a trajectory from the surface of the body to the digit. Like the variations in its own mode of address, the texts we consider are not unified by a single author, genre, region or theme. Rather than attempting to offer a totalising account of the representation of touch in contemporary writing, then, I hope to demonstrate through a discussion of a range of genres – autobiography, the epistolary, film, the novel, poetry and short fiction – the different ways that writing touches. This diversity allows us to touch on a variety of literary textures, and offers me, in turn, the opportunity to respond through my own textual interventions. What brings these writers together is their refusal to take our tactile encounters for granted. Notwithstanding their cultural diversity, these texts all deal

with experiences of liminality as they at the same time press at the limits of both language and form.

Chapter 1 explores the representation of the skin ego in Siri Hustvedt's novel, *What I Loved*. Rather than simply discussing the representation of the skin in literature, however, it examines the skin *of* literature and the ways that writing performs contact. Considering Anzieu's description of a 'skin of words', it thinks about the ways in which a text, like a skin, is caught up in an endless process of destruction and renewal. Chapter 2 further develops our discussion of Anzieu, focusing on his account of the skin as a palimpsest that preserves traces of experience inscribed on its surface. Here, we read the 'palimpsestuous' quality of Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*. Rather than focusing on the traces *inscribed* in the narrative, however, this chapter employs Nancy's theory of *exscription* in order to interrogate the traces that are 'inscribed-outside' the text. Moving from skin to touch, Chapter 3 addresses the biblical resonances of Freud's prohibition of touch in H.D.'s account of their psychoanalysis in *Tribute to Freud* and her letters to Bryher, collected and edited by Susan Stanford Friedman. Both within and without the psychoanalytic session, H.D. and Freud, we see, perform Derrida's instruction to touch, but without making contact. Chapter 4 consolidates a theory of 'tactile poetics'. Discussing Derrida's account of Cixous's writing as a 'poem of touch', we consider the ways that her writing simultaneously interrogates and enacts contact, touching the reader in strange and sometimes startling ways.[59] Reading the material surface of Cixous's recent novel, *So Close*, the chapter draws on work by Renu Bora in order to explore the ways that literary textures circulate affect. In Chapter 5, we return to an examination of the spacing that always interrupts touch, and think through the relationships between touching, distance and dancing. Written in 29 tangos, this chapter takes as its starting point Anne Carson's book-length poem, *The Beauty of the Husband – A Fictional Essay in 29 Tangos*, developing Derrida's discussion of *distanz* in *Spurs* and 'Choreographies'. Thinking about the intimate *distanz* at the heart of the original tango dances in Buenos Aires, I hope to show that Carson's intimacy is not without its own interruptions, destabilising our experience of intimate contact. Chapter 6 turns from non-localised touch to specific body parts. Through a series of letters to the reader, we examine the primacy of the hand in John Berger's *From A to X*. This chapter renegotiates the relationship between the visual and the tactile by considering the repeating motif of blindness in the novel alongside Derrida's account of the hand that 'ventures forth' in *Memoirs of the Blind*. Derrida's challenge to the assumption that the hand is exclusive

to the 'humanual' also informs our discussion of the non-human hand in Chapter 7, which recognises a growing interest in haptic technologies and the relationship between the screen and eye-contact. Thinking through the role of the hand in the 'hominizing process', the chapter interrogates Derrida's refusal to neglect the non-human by considering prosthetic hands in the recently restored Fritz Lang film, *Metropolis* (1927/2010). Questioning the manipulations of the hand in haptic technologies, then, we turn to the digital and virtual mediation of contact. The final chapter draws together the themes of interruption, prohibition and prosthesis in order to present, in conclusion, the return of spectral contact. Reading phantom limbs in Elizabeth Bowen's short story, 'Hand in Glove' (1952), we explore the relationship between haunting and haptology. At the same time, the discussion opens to broader questions of dead hands and their significance. Considering the nature of ghostly contact, we ask how ways of thinking and writing are 'handed on'. Responding to recent work by Nicole Pepperell that addresses the role of the hand in inheritance, the book concludes by demonstrating that textual contact is always both a manipulation and a manoeuvre involving one or more missing limbs.

Touch paper VI: a final interruption

Touch is the subject of both miracles and mistrust. Revered for its healing potential – the laying on of hands – it is also treated with some suspicion, requiring, it seems, a good deal of tact. Touch thus also offers us a sense of how we might think and read, and this book hopes to simultaneously move beyond the skin and take care not to touch too much. Throughout, I work with these contradictions in mind. Inevitably, there are areas into which I venture only briefly, but not, I hope, moments when I should keep my hands to myself. The book's exploration of the relationship between writing and touch in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature means that there are, necessarily, many directions towards which this text does not extend itself. And when I say touching, I of course mean touchings. We are not speaking of a single, unified, homogenised touch, but of a touching that is plural, varied in tone and texture, and signifying differently in different contexts and cultures. It is a touch that is always capable of changing, of being changed, as well as being exchanged. As a 'touch paper' for ongoing critical debate, or as a site of tactile exchange, this book does not seek to provide a totalising account of touch in literature; instead, it hopes to tender a series of openings or passageways to thinking through an impossible tact. And

rather than closing down a discussion of touch, it is this impossible tact that opens up to something other, something to come.

Notes

1. Michaels, 'Into Arrival', pp. 151–2.
2. Woolf, *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*, p. 17.
3. Ahmed and Stacey, 'Introduction', pp. 1–17 (p. 15).
4. Ahmed and Stacey, 'Introduction', p. 15.
5. Serres, *The Five Senses*, p. 35.
6. See Derrida, *Without Alibi*.
7. See, for instance, Classen, *Worlds of Sense* and *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch*.
8. Derrida, *On Touching*, p. 267.
9. Connor, *The Book of Skin*, p. 26.
10. Connor, *The Book of Skin*, p. 24.
11. Benthien, *Skin*, p. 53.
12. Benthien, *Skin*, pp. 145–62; Biddle, 'Inscribing Identity', pp. 177–93; Classen, 'Animal Skins', pp. 93–122; Prosser, *Second Skins*. Other recent studies of the skin to which this study remains indebted include: Curtin, *Out of Touch*; Taylor, *Hiding*; and Ulnik, *Skin in Psychoanalysis*.
13. Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, p. 17. Anzieu's theory of the skin ego is addressed in more detail in Chapter 1.
14. Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, p. 17.
15. Aristotle, *De Anima*, p. 180.
16. Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*, p. 19.
17. Serres, *The Five Senses*, p. 26. We return to Serres's approach to touch in Chapter 2.
18. Das, *Touch and Intimacy*, p. 12.
19. Das, *Touch and Intimacy*, p. 20.
20. Montagu, *Touching*, p. 91.
21. Goh and Bishop, 'Introduction', pp. 3–9 (p. 8).
22. In addition, my research draws on and responds to the following studies: Classen, *The Book of Touch*; Garrington, *Haptic Modernism*; Marks, *Touch*; Paterson, *The Senses of Touch*; Segal, *Consensuality*; Tilley (ed.), 'The Victorian Tactile Imagination'; and Waters, *Poetry's Touch*.
23. McMahon, *Cinema and Contact*, p. 6.
24. Demonstrating the body's capacity to be both the perceiving object and the subject of perception, Merleau-Ponty writes:

    > If my left hand is touching my right hand, and if I should suddenly wish to apprehend with my right hand the work of my left hand as it touches, this reflection of the body upon itself always miscarries at the last moment: the moment I feel my left hand with my right hand, I correspondingly cease touching my right hand with my left hand. (Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 9)

25. Nancy, *Corpus*, p. 128.